

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1953

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 20282

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA THREE LINE TWO)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, FR, CASC, VS, US

SUBJECT: FRENCH PROCESSING OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: (A) STATE 181041 (B) PARIS 15543

SUMMARY: QUAI OFFICER CHARGED WITH FRENCH REFUGEE PROGRAM, AMBASSADOR CHAYET, SAID GOF HAD NOT CHANGED PRIORITIES WHICH FAVORED ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO REFUGEES IN ASIA OVER THOSE IN CONTINENTAL U.S. SINCE FORMER WERE IN MORE PRECARIOUS SITUATION. FRENCH HAVE FOUND A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF REFUGEES NEED SOME GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE. OTHER PROBLEMS ARE POSSIBLE ARRIVAL EN MASSE OF LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WITH PREVIOUSLY APPROVED VISAS AND OF FRENCH NATIONALS IN SVN. FRENCH ASKED USG FOR INVENTORY OF REFUGEES WITH SPECIAL SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN FRANCE AND ITS OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS AND TERRITORIES. WHILE REMAINING FIRM ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF INCREASING THE PACE OF ACCEPTING REFUGEES, CHAYET SAID GOF WOULD MOVE AHEAD ON 1,500 VISAS A MONTH WORLD-WIDE LEADING TO ABOUT 15,000 VISAS DURING THE YEAR. END SUMMARY

1. CONGEN AND ANOTHER EMBOFF SAW QUAI DIRECTOR FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENTIONS AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS CHAYET AUGUST 4 TO REINFORCE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST THAT GOF
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EXPEDITE PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS FOR REFUGEES IN U.S.

SYSTEM TO COME TO FRANCE. CHAYET SAID HE HAD NOT YET HEARD FROM HIS GOOD FRIEND CHARGE DE LA GORCE. HE SAID HE WELL UNDERSTOOD U.S. CONCERNS SINCE HE WAS SO INVOLVED IN SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN FRANCE. HOWEVER, FRENCH PRIORITIES REMAIN THE SAME AS THOSE HE HAD GIVEN TO IATF DEPUTY DIRECTOR WISNER ON JUNE 16 (REF B). FRENCH CONTINUE TO THINK THAT REFUGEES IN CONTINENTAL U.S. CAMPS ARE IN LESS PRECARIOUS POSITION THAN THOSE IN THAILAND, HONG KONG, SINGAPORE, KUALA LUMPUR, SEOUL AND GUAM. PRIORITY WAS THEREFORE STILL BEING GIVEN TO THOSE IN THE FAR EAST. CHAYET SAID THEY WERE ACCORDINGLY PROCESSING RAPIDLY AND FAVORABLY APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED THROUGH ICEM FOR REFUGEES ON GUAM. REFUGEES IN U.S. CAMPS WOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE A LOWER PRIORITY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CHILDREN WITH PARENTS OR ADULT RELATIVES IN FRANCE.

2. CHAYET SAID THAT ALL TOGETHER SOME 6,000 VISAS HAVE BEEN APPROVED TO DATE. OF THOSE WITH APPROVED VISAS, ONLY 2,500 REFUGEES HAVE COME TO FRANCE. GOF IS THEREFORE CONCERNED BY THE POSSIBILITY THAT MANY OF THE 3,500 WITH VALID VISAS COULD SUDDENLY COME TO FRANCE, THEREBY PUTTING A SUDDEN STRAIN ON LIMITED FRENCH RECEPTION FACILITIES. FRENCH FACILITIES ARE BASICALLY KEYED TO THE 1,500 VISAS WHICH ARE ISSUED PER MONTH.

3. OF THE 2,500 WHO HAVE ACTUALLY COME TO FRANCE, APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT HAVE REQUIRED SOME RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOF, OFTEN CONTRARY TO THE ORIGINAL ASSURANCES BY THE SPONSOR. OCCASIONALLY REFUGEES FIND THAT SPONSOR'S ACCOMMODATIONS ARE INFERIOR TO THOSE PROVIDED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES USING GOF SUPPORT. WITH FRENCH FACILITIES LIMITED TO 3 OR 400 PLACES AT ANY ONE TIME, THE FRENCH ARE RELUCTANT TO EXCEED CURRENT WORLDWIDE APPROVAL RATE

EVEN FOR REFUGEES WHOSE SPONSORS HAVE ASSURED THEM THERE WILL BE NO CALL ON FRENCH FACILITIES. GOF HAS EVEN WITHDRAWN THE DISCRETION IT HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN ITS CONSULS TO APPROVE VISAS FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES

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OF REFUGEES BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH THE AFFIDAVITS OF SUPPORT.

4. ANOTHER FACTOR WORRYING THE GOF IS THE POSSIBLE ARRIVAL OF FRENCH NATIONALS FROM SVN. GOF BELIEVES THE CARAVELLE AIR LIFT FROM SAIGON TO BANGKOK MAY BE IMPLEMENTED SOON, AND IF SO, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT SOME OF THE 2,500 TO 3,000 FRENCH NATIONALS WHO

HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO COME TO FRANCE
MAY REQUIRE FRENCH SUPPORT, THEREBY COMPETING FOR
RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR INDOCHINESE. GOF STILL HOPES TO
AVOID SETTING UP LARGE GOVERNMENT CAMPS EVEN FOR RE-
PATRIATED FRENCH NATIONALS.

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5. CHAYET NOTED THAT WISNER HAD EXPECTED SOON TO HAVE
AN IBM READ OUT OF THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF
REFUGEES WITHIN THE U.S. SYSTEM. NOW THAT THE
COMMITTEE FOR ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINESE IN FRANCE IS IN
OPERATION, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF PLACING IN FRENCH
OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS AND TERRITORIES AS WELL AS FRANCE,
A CERTAIN NUMBER OF REFUGEES WITH SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL
OR MANUAL SKILLS IN SHORT SUPPLY. CHAYET HOPED WE COULD
SOON PROVIDE HIM WITH AT LEAST PRELIMINARY LISTINGS OF
TECHNICALLY TRAINED REFUGEES. GOF CAN DO LITTLE TO
FIND EMPLOYMENT FOR LAWYERS, DIPLOMATS, ECONOMISTS OR
LIBERAL ARTS ACADEMICS.

6. IN SUM, CHAYET GAVE US LITTLE HOPE FOR A RAPID
INCREASE IN THE RATE OF APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS BY
REFUGEES IN CONTINENTAL U.S. IN ADDITION TO ARGUING
THE NEED FOR FRENCH CAUTION BECAUSE OF THE 3,500
REFUGEES WITH VISAS WHO HAVE NOT YET ARRIVED IN FRANCE
AND THE FRENCH PROGRAM OF EVACUATING ITS NATIONALS FROM

SVN, CHAYET NOTED THAT THE CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT
SITUATION IN FRANCE CREATED PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS.
AN IMPORTANT, IF TEMPORARY IMPEDIMENT, IS THE DIFFICULTY
IN OBTAINING ANY IMPORTANT GOF POLICY DECISION SUCH AS
A CHANGE IN PRIORITIES DURING THE SUMMER VACATION.
CHAYET CONTINUED TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OVERALL
FRENCH CONTRIBUTION WHICH WOULD RESULT IN ACCEPTING
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SOME 15,000 REFUGEES IN ONE YEAR.
GAMMON

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